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TAGS: OPDC PREL ZI
SUBJECT: LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH FROM MDC LEADER TSVANGIRAI

¶1. On October 16, Embassy was asked to convey a letter from Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai to President Bush and other current and former

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USG officials seeking a more active UN role in addressing Zimbabwe's crises. We have pouches the letters to AF/S and convey the text of the Tsvangirai-Bush letter in paragraph 2 below. The other letters contain identical text and were delivered in sealed envelopes addressed to former President Clinton; former President Carter; UN Ambassador Negroponte; Representatives Ed Royce and Donald Payne; Senators Daschle and Lott; Reverend Jesse Jackson; and Chester Crocker.

¶2. Begin text of Tsvangirai-Bush letter:

Mr. George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
Washington DC

October 14, 2002

Dear Mr. President,

Re: Call for UN Security Council action on Crimes Against Humanity Committed by the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe.

On behalf of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe, I write to you Sir, and the other Five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council.

Since February 2000, several efforts by the United States of America, the European Union, the Commonwealth, SADC, the World Council of Churches and several local and international civic organizations appealed to Robert Mugabe to uphold the rule of law, respect human rights and put a stop to political murders, rape, torture and state-sponsored terror and violence, but the illegitimate Mugabe regime has not relented. Instead, it has demonstrated utter contempt of international opinion and has reaffirmed its commitment to carrying out crimes against humanity as a means of subjugating the people of Zimbabwe and denying them the right to freely determine their own destiny.

There is growing evidence on the ground in Zimbabwe today Sir, that the subjugated and brutalized majority are preparing to react violently against this state of affairs. The consequent bloody civil strife will not only result in a massive loss of life but will inevitably spill into the territory of the neighboring states of the region. The international community must not allow Mugabe to continue charting this path towards national destruction and darkness.

It is in the context of this grim and extremely dangerous situation that the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which represents the legitimate aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe, calls for the intervention of the UN Security Council in the Zimbabwe crisis in accordance with Article 39 (Chapter VII powers) of the United Nations Charter. Crimes that rival fascism and Nazism in scale and wickedness are being committed daily, not by an occupying force, but by a supposedly sovereign government of the country.

We therefore call for the urgent institution of an international program for Zimbabwe under the auspices of the United Nations, designed to:

¶1. Investigate the gross human rights abuses and crimes against humanity that are being perpetrated by the Mugabe regime.

¶2. Investigate state-sponsored violence and the breakdown of the rule of law.

¶3. Investigate the denial of food relief to suspected political opponents and the consequent mass starvation.

14. Facilitate the realization of a free, unfettered and fair expression of the popular will of the people of Zimbabwe.

We ask and plead with you Sir, and your fellow permanent members of the UN Security Council, to place these issues on the agenda of the Security Council for serious discussion and speedy resolution. In our humble view, there remains no other viable alternative in the quest to put a stop to the crimes against humanity that are being perpetrated daily by the Mugabe regime.

The Mugabe regime has recreated the conditions of the Rhodesian crisis in 1965, when the Ian Smith regime effected a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and established an illegitimate government in order to maintain a racial political order over the majority of the population.

UDI sought to deny the majority of the people of the then Rhodesia the right of self-determination. In 1966, in reaction to that development, the UN Security Council (SC Res.232 (1966) and subsequent resolutions), acted swiftly to confront an ominous development that threatened regional and international peace and security.

In reacting to UDI, the UN Security Council recognized the legitimacy of the Zimbabwe people's struggle against racist minority rule, which was undemocratic. Similarly, the Security Council must legitimately consider Robert Mugabe's forestalling of the installation of a legitimate elected government through illegitimate force, and the consequent violations of human rights, as clearly constituting a threat to international peace and security.

Through his brutal suppression of the right of the Zimbabwean people to freely elect a government of their choice and through his regime's perpetration of crimes against humanity, Robert Mugabe has created an explosive and dangerous situation akin to Ian Smith's UDI. A corrupt, murderous and illegitimate regime maintains state sponsored violence against a defenseless civilian population. This situation is rapidly degenerating into mass killings, refugee flows and mass starvation.

The prevailing internal situation therefore constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security. SADC Heads of State and government came to the same conclusion at their Luanda, Angola Summit when they denied the Mugabe regime the opportunity to host the SADC 2003 Summit. We believe that the international community must proceed rapidly to use this SADC position as a launching pad for determined action to clamp down on the growing spiral of violence and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Mugabe regime.

In his violent seizure of power, Robert Mugabe must not be allowed to invoke the international legal term, "national sovereignty" in a vain endeavor to reinforce his illegitimate political position internationally. He is susceptible to a megalomania that identifies his corporeal self with symbols of nation and state. This provides the context in which Robert Mugabe inflicts crimes against humanity upon those Zimbabweans trapped within the boundaries of the territory that he confuses with himself. In Robert Mugabe's case, the term "national sovereignty" must not be used to allow him to shield the suppression of the real popular sovereignty from external rebuke and sanction.

The sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe must be protected, but the object of the protection is not the power base of a tyrant who rules directly by naked and illegitimate force or through the apparatus of a totalitarian political order. Instead, what must be protected is the capacity of the people of Zimbabwe to freely express and effect legitimate choices about the identities and policies of those who govern them.

The time for the Security Council to act is now. Delay will result in a costly catastrophe in terms of human lives.

We therefore urgently appeal to you, Mr. President, as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, to act with your characteristic determination to put a stop to the violent abuse of human rights and the carnage that is going on and assist in the process of laying a healing hand on the country and its tortured people.

I avail myself, Mr. President, this opportunity to renew the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Morgan Tsvangirai,
President, Movement for Democratic Change.
END TEXT.

¶3. Comment: Tsvangirai's urgent appeal to the United Nations reflects the growing pressure the opposition party is under from the GOZ, the MDC's inability to devise effective, home-grown solutions to Zimbabwe's intensifying cycle of crises, and a genuine concern that the situation here will soon degenerate into civil conflict.

SULLIVAN